



## Gateway National Recreation Area Staten Island Unit *Gateway to Opportunity*

Established: October 27, 1972 as a unit of Gateway National Recreation Area

Location: Situated along the Raritan Bay on the south shore of Staten Island

2006 Gateway National Recreation Area (Jamaica Bay, Sandy Hook and Staten Island Units) Visitation: 9,788,710

Overview: From fishing to sailing, soccer and baseball to model airplane flying, Gateway's Staten Island Unit offers a wide range of recreational opportunities. This is in addition to the rich history of Fort Wadsworth and World War Veterans Park at Miller Field and the natural areas of Great Kills Park. The Staten Island Unit hosts thousands of visitors for various field sports such as baseball, softball, football, soccer and cricket. Ranger led nature walks and hikes at Miller Field and Great Kills Park are popular.

Miller Field was once the site of a farm owned by the Vanderbilt family who later sold the property to the U.S. government in 1919 for use as an Army Air Corps base. The field was named for Captain Ely Miller who was the first American aviator killed in combat in France during World War I. In 1929 Admiral Richard Bird used Miller Field to test his new plane and make final preparations before his historic flight over the South Pole. Great Kills Park contains ocean beaches, nature trails, model airplane field, boat launch and fishing areas.

Fort Wadsworth, is a former military post dating back to the 17th century. Hoffman and Swinburne Islands, former immigrant quarantine stations, not open to the public. It lies underneath the Verrazanno Narrows Bridge and is one of the oldest military sites in the United States. Strategically located at the entrance to New York Harbor, Fort Wadsworth guarded New York City for almost 200 years.

Fort Wadsworth was one of the most important military bases in the country for much of our nation's history. In 1995, the last military tenant, the navy, departed and officially turned Fort Wadsworth over to the Department of the Interior. In 1997, Fort Wadsworth opened to the public as part of Gateway National Recreation Area.

Nature lovers can enjoy the numerous trails through a variety of habitats including woodlands, open beaches and the swamp white oak forest. There are picnic and limited swimming areas, model airplane field and food concession service, a marina, jogging and bicycling paths.

**Visitor Centers/Exhibits/Tours:** Taking a tour of the fortifications provides an exceptional look at part of the critical system that protected New York Harbor for centuries. Walk through its catacomb-like passageways and see what it was like to be a defender in the days of old.

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